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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/807,091	03/23/2004	Darryl A. Bourgoyne	H055010.0035US1	3844
1200	7590	07/27/2005	EXAMINER	
AKIN, GUMP, STRAUSS, HAUER & FELD 1111 LOUISIANA STREET 44TH FLOOR HOUSTON, TX 77002			DANG, HOANG C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3672	

DATE MAILED: 07/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/807,091

Applicant(s)

BOURGOYNE ET AL.

Examiner

Hoang Dang

Art Unit

3672

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 May 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 43,44 and 46-74 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 43,46-54,56-61,64,70-72 and 74 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 44,55,62,63,65-69 and 73 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>2/7/05, 7/9/04</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 48, 49, 50, 51, 70 and 74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Harrison (US 3,638,721).

The claimed structure reads exactly on the reference's structure when members (42), (60), (41), (40) and (35) of Harrison are respectively considered as "housing", "housing opening", "assembly", "sealing member" and "flexible conduit" as recited. It is noted that the functional recitation "adapted for positioning above a portion of a marine riser" is given no patentable weight.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 43, 46-54, 56-61, 64, 70 and 74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the April 1998 Offshore Drilling with Light Weight Fluids Joint Industry

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Project Presentation (reference II on PTO-1449 filed 5/7/2004) (herein after "Reference II) in view of Harrison (US 3,638,721) or vice versa.

Reference II discloses a method of drilling an offshore well with lightweight fluids. On page C-9, it discloses the use of a rotating head at the top of a riser without telescopic joint. Reference II does not disclose the structure of the rotating head. Harrison '721 discloses a method and apparatus for drilling an offshore well from a floating vessel as that of Reference II. However, Harrison teaches using a rotating head 22 including a housing 42 that rotatably supports a removable seal member 40 and has an opening 60 for returning drilling fluid to the floating vessel through a flexible pipe 35. The rotatable seal member 40 is movable with an inner member 41 to sealably engage a rotatable drill string. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use of a rotating head having a structure as claimed in the Reference II in view of the teaching of Harrison.

Alternatively, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a riser in Harrison and locate the rotating head 22 above the riser as claimed in view of the teaching of Reference II.

5. Claims 71 and 72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reference II in view of Harrison or vice versa, as applied to claim 70 above, and further in view of Leach (US 4,813,495).

Reference II, as modified by Harrison or vice versa, discloses the invention as claimed except for the valve for closing the connector. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the connector for the mud return line with a valve as claimed in view of the teaching of Leach '495 so that the flow of

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drilling fluid through the mud return line can be advantageously controlled as evidenced by Leach (see valves 54, 56 and 58 in Figure 1).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 44, 55, 62, 63, 65-69 and 73 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hoang Dang whose telephone number is 571-272-7028. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:15-5:45 Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

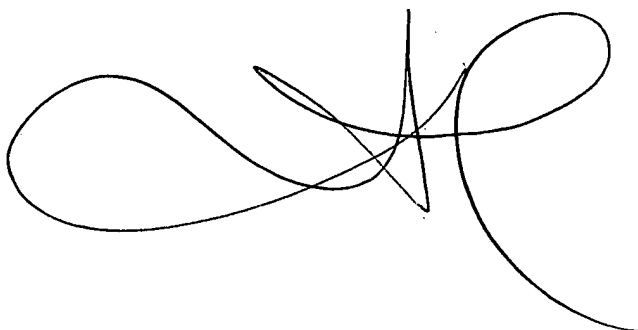
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system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Hoang Dang
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3672

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'H' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.